

9. Note on the Wild Goats of the Caucasus. By P. L. SCLATER, M.A., Ph.D., F.R.S., Secretary to the Society.

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In my "Remarks on the various Species of Wild Goats," read before the Society in May last<sup>1</sup>, I followed Blasius, Gray, and other authorities in uniting *Ægoceros pallasii*, Rouiller, with *Capra caucasica*, Güld. The recent receipt by the British Museum of Natural History of specimens of what is doubtless the true *C. caucasica* makes it evident that this identification is quite erroneous, as will indeed be at once manifest from the sketches now exhibited of these two very different animals.

Thinking the existence of these two fine species must be well known to our excellent Corresponding Member Dr. Radde, I wrote to him for information on the subject, and received a reply (dated Tiflis, February 9/21), from which the following is an extract:—

"In accordance with your wish, I send you some short notes on *Capra caucasica* and *Ægoceros pallasii*. The former is a good species, and inhabits the western range of the Great Caucasus around the centre of Mount Elbruz. On Kasbeck I have never found this species, but only *C. pallasii*; so also throughout the whole of the eastern Caucasus, east of Kasbeck, and in all Daghestan only *C. pallasii* is found. Blasius has united the two species; and if one only regards the horns, it must be allowed that some very old examples of *C. pallasii* resemble in the form of curve *C. caucasica*, but always have their points more turned inwards. I obtained horns of this form from Suanetia, *i. e.* on the south side of the Great Caucasian range.

"Dinnik published an article on these two species in Russian, about three or four years ago, in the 'Schriften der Naturforscher Gesellschaft' of St. Petersburg, and gave figures of their horns. In *C. pallasii* the horns lie flatter and twist more outwards from the forehead; in *C. caucasica* they go mostly directly backwards and outwards, with the exception of the points, in one plane. I send herewith copies of Dinnik's figures; but should remark that I possess very old horns of *C. pallasii* which also lie almost in one plane, with the points turning in a half-crescent shape towards one another. I send you also a sketch of these horns. This last form perhaps represents a third species, as they fit in well neither with *C. caucasica* nor with *C. pallasii*. On the whole, however, I am of opinion that the form of the horns varies much in individuals.

"Both the species belong to the Great Caucasus, and are not found on the Little Caucasus, or Armenian Highlands. Here, however, *Capra ægagrus*, from the sea-level up to the high alpine heights of 12,000 feet, and upon Mount Ararat to 14,000 feet, takes their

<sup>1</sup> See P. Z. S. 1886, p. 314.

place, together with two species of Wild Sheep. On the Great Caucasus *C. ægagrus* is found locally, but not generally. I have obtained it from the upper Ardon, western Daghestan, and other localities, but it is not found in the eastern ranges."

I have likewise applied for information on the subject of *Capra caucasica* to our Foreign Member, Dr. Strauch, of St Petersburg. Dr. Strauch was so kind as to send me immediately the number of the Russian journal mentioned by Dr. Radde, which contains the original article by Mr. Dinnik. This article Mr. Delmar Morgan, F.R.G.S., has most kindly translated for me, and it will be found published in the last number of the 'Annals and Magazine of Natural History'<sup>1</sup>, together with a copy of the plate, which the conductors of that journal have liberally furnished.

Dr. Strauch has also kindly furnished me with a list of the specimens of *Capra caucasica* and *Capra pallasii* in the museum of the Academy of St. Petersburg. It is perhaps not now necessary to read this list; but I may say that it shows that the Academy possesses, as might have been expected, an ample series of specimens of both species. In short, there can be no longer any possibility of not admitting the distinctness of these two animals; and the wonder is that they should have been ever confounded together, the very different shape and curvature of the horns being at once sufficient to distinguish them. I may, however, add a few words upon some of the synonyms attributed to these two Sheep.

In the first place, *Capra caucasica* of Pallas appears to have been little recognized since the time of its describer until recent days. *Capra caucasica* of Keyserling and Blasius, Wirbelth. Europa's, p. 28 (1840), and of Blasius, Säugeth. Deutschlands, p. 479 (1857), as also *Ægoceros caucasica*, Gray, Cat. of Mamm. pt. iii. p. 148 (1852), are all referable to *Capra pallasii*. It is probable also that *Ovis cylindricornis* of Blyth (P. Z. S. 1840, p. 68), based on a description contained in a letter by Col. Hamilton Smith of an animal which died at Toulon, really refers to *C. pallasii*; but as this is not certain, it would not be just to set aside Rouiller's name given a year subsequently in favour of the former appellation.

As regards *Capra pallasii* of Schinz (Neue Denkschr. allgem. Schweiz. Gesellsch. vol. ii. p. 9), which was given by Gray (Cat. of Mamm. pt. iii. p. 148, 1852) as a synonym of *Ægoceros caucasica*, it will be found on reference to that work that this is merely a synonym of *Capra sibirica*.

<sup>1</sup> "On the Caucasian Mountain-Goat (*Capra caucasica*, Güld.)." By H. Dinnik. Ann. & Mag. Nat. Hist. ser. 5, xix. p. 450.